

### CLAIM AMENDMENTS

#### Claim 1 (Currently Amended)

A method for operating a dishwasher comprising:

(a) loading a dishwasher with items in need of washing;

(b) closing said loaded dishwasher;

(c) steaming said items in a water saturated atmosphere at a pressure of greater than about 15 psi, a temperature of ~~equal to or~~ greater than about 100 °C, a time of equal to or greater than about 15 minutes; and

(d) after said steaming, washing said items in said dishwasher with soap and water to clean said items,

wherein said steaming is conducted prior to any washing with water.

#### Claim 2 (Currently Amended)

In a method for operating a dishwasher where items in a closed dishwasher are washed with soap and water and subsequently dried, the improvement comprising steaming said items in a closed dishwasher prior to said items being washed with water, said steam cleaning being conducted in a water saturated atmosphere, at a pressure of ~~equal to or~~ greater than about 15 psi, a temperature of ~~equal to or~~

greater than about 100 °C, a time of equal to or greater than about 15 minutes.

Claim 3 (New Claim)

The method of claim 1 wherein said steaming is accomplished by injecting steam from an external steam generating unit through a nozzle and into said dishwasher.

Claim 4 (New Claim)

The method of claim 2 wherein said steaming is accomplished by injecting steam from an external steam generating unit through a nozzle and into said dishwasher.